

person who is interested in the seafood production of our State will give it his wholehearted support. For the seafood industry is indeed one of the most important industries of our State, affecting in particular the economy of this area. Fish, crabs, clams, and oysters of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries and the other tidal waters produce an annual income in excess of \$13 million to the more than 9,000 fishermen and the some 4,000 persons engaged in the seafood processing industries.

All of you, I know, are familiar with the State's main effort during the past four years to halt the decline of the oyster yield. Using hydraulically dredged reef shells, approximately 22,000,000 bushels of cultch have been planted on the natural bars and in areas set aside for the production of seed oysters. The Department of Tidewater Fisheries advises me that this year 932,000 bushels of high-quality seed were transplanted, where they eventually will provide an additional income to watermen amounting to many millions of dollars. The significance of this figure becomes apparent when compared with the transplanting of a decade ago. In 1951-1952, for example, only 65,000 bushels were planted. The 932,000 bushels transplanted this year is 50 per cent higher than that of any previous year. The fall oyster survey of numerous shell plantings indicate the heaviest settings of any year, the Department of Tidewater Fisheries advises me. In a recent survey of plantings made in 1960, 1961 and 1962 in the Kedges Straits demonstration area, comprising some half-million bushels, I am told that there is an average of from 800 to 1200 spat and small oysters per bushel.

The future of the shell dredging program looks bright indeed. In a recent survey of the upper Bay area, there has been located 40 million cubic yards of shells. This, I am told, is enough oyster shells to operate our seed producing program for the next 60 years.

Although our principal effort is in the rehabilitation of the oyster production, the State is interested in increasing the yield of all other seafood products. The development of the soft-shell clam fishery during the past few years is one of the dramatic episodes in the history of the Maryland seafood industry. Maryland is now producing more than 60 per cent of the entire catch of clams in the United States. This year, I am told there was a record catch of 600,000 bushels, as compared with 520,000 bushels last year. This is an increase of 13 to 14 per cent. The State Department of Tidewater Fisheries has carefully delineated and protected the spawning areas for rockfish. We